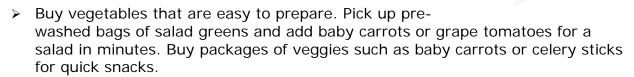
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# Tips to Help You Eat Vegetables

## In General:

- Buy fresh vegetables in season. They cost less and are likely to be at their peak flavor.
- > Stock up on frozen vegetables for quick and easy cooking in the microwave.



- > Use a microwave to quickly "zap" vegetables. White or sweet potatoes can be baked quickly this way.
- > Vary your veggie choices to keep meals interesting.
- > Try crunchy vegetables, raw or lightly steamed.

## For the Best Nutritional Value:

Select vegetables with more potassium often, such as sweet potatoes, white potatoes, white beans, tomato products (paste, sauce, and juice), beet greens, soybeans, lima beans, spinach, lentils, and kidney beans.



- Sauces or seasonings can add calories, saturated fat, and sodium to vegetables. Use the Nutrition Facts label to compare the calories and % Daily Value for saturated fat and sodium in plain and seasoned vegetables.
- Prepare more foods from fresh ingredients to lower sodium intake. Most sodium in the food supply comes from packaged or processed foods.
- > Buy canned vegetables labeled "reduced sodium," "low sodium," or "no salt added." If you want to add a little salt it will likely be less than the amount in the regular canned product.

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#### At Meals:

Plan some meals around a vegetable main dish, such as a vegetable stir-fry or soup. Then add other foods to complement it.



- Try a main dish salad for lunch. Go light on the salad dressing.
- > Include a green salad with your dinner every night.
- > Shred carrots or zucchini into meatloaf, casseroles, quick breads, and muffins.
- Include chopped vegetables in pasta sauce or lasagna.
- Order a veggie pizza with toppings like mushrooms, green peppers, and onions, and ask for extra veggies.
- ➤ Use pureed, cooked vegetables such as potatoes to thicken stews, soups and gravies. These add flavor, nutrients, and texture.
- > Grill vegetable kabobs as part of a barbecue meal. Try tomatoes, mushrooms, green peppers, and onions.

## Make Vegetables More Appealing:

Many vegetables taste great with a dip or dressing. Try a low-fat salad dressing with raw broccoli, red and green peppers, celery sticks or cauliflower.



- Add color to salads by adding baby carrots, shredded red cabbage, or spinach leaves. Include in-season vegetables for variety through the year.
- Include beans or peas in flavorful mixed dishes, such as chili or minestrone soup.
- > Decorate plates or serving dishes with vegetable slices.
- Keep a bowl of cut-up vegetables in a see-through container in the refrigerator. Carrot and celery sticks are traditional, but consider red or green pepper strips, broccoli florets, or cucumber slices.



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## **Vegetable Tips for Children:**

- Set a good example for children by eating vegetables with meals and as snacks.
- Let children decide on the dinner vegetables or what goes into salads.
- Depending on their age, children can help shop for, clean, peel, or cut up vegetables.
- > Allow children to pick a new vegetable to try while shopping.
- > Use cut-up vegetables as part of afternoon snacks.
- > Children often prefer foods served separately. So, rather than mixed vegetables try serving two vegetables separately.

# Keep It Safe:

- Rinse vegetables before preparing or eating them. Under clean, running water, rub vegetables briskly with your hands to remove dirt and surface microorganisms. Dry with a clean cloth towel or paper towel after rinsing.
- > Keep vegetables separate from raw meat, poultry and seafood while shopping, preparing, or storing.

Key Consumer Message Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.

